

Many states are beginning to take the lead on this issue. Maryland, Connecticut, Delaware, and New Mexico have all scaled back voting bans on ex-felons who have paid the price for their crimes and now want to participate in the democratic process as citizens. The growing roster of states which allow ex-felons to vote is encouraging. We must help along the process by enacting this bill and taking this crucial step at the Federal level.

The legislation we will introduce constitutes a narrowly crafted effort to expand voting rights for ex-felons, while protecting state prerogatives to generally establish voting qualifications. The legislation would only apply to persons who have been released from prison, and it would only apply to federal elections. As such, our bill is fully consistent with constitutional requirements established by the Supreme Court in a series of decisions upholding federal voting rights laws.

The legislation has been supported by a broad coalition of groups interested in voting and civil rights, including the NAACP, ACLU, the National Council of Churches (National and Washington Office), the National Urban League, the Human Rights Watch and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, among many others.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR CLARK THOMPSON

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker it is my distinct honor to commend one of Northern California's most distinguished citizens and a great friend of mine, Mayor Clark Thompson of Petaluma, California. He has served the people of Petaluma for 25 years, culminating over the last 4 years with his service as Mayor of that fine city. His leadership and pursuit of excellence will be sorely missed as he steps down from a career of public service.

A longtime resident of Petaluma, Mayor Clark Thompson began his career in public service by serving the city on the Parking and Business Improvement Area Committee. From there, he served on the Committee to study and initiate bicycle paths and access, as a member of the Petaluma Valley Hospital Foundation Board, and as a member of the Petaluma Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce Board. He is still a lifetime member of the Casa Grande Boosters Club.

At a time when his beloved city faced many challenges Mayor Thompson brought a broad vision to lead the citizens of Petaluma into the future. His determination is unwavering; his pride in his city is unequalled. I have had the pleasure to work with Mayor Thompson on a professional level, and witnessed his abilities as a leader when he solved Petaluma's long standing flood control issues. He has the uncommon ability to work with people of different beliefs in order to do what is right. The city of Petaluma and its people have benefited greatly from Clark Thompson's years as a public servant.

Although he has been a devoted public servant, Mr. Thompson has always held his family as a top priority. He and his wife, Sue Ellen, originally settled in the community of

Petaluma to raise their two daughters, Molly and Abigail. Clark's retirement will allow him to spend more time with his family, something he will greatly cherish.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating Mayor Clark Thompson on his retirement after 25 years of diligent service to the city of Petaluma, California. Clark has been a valuable member of the community for which he cares so deeply, and his service will be greatly missed. I wish him the best of luck in future endeavors, and I know he will enjoy his retirement for many years to come.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO: UPPER PINE RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District of La Plata County, Colorado for their service and dedication during one of Colorado's most formidable fire seasons. Last summer, the Fire Protection District played an integral role in containing the Missionary Ridge forest fire that burned over 70,000 acres in Southwestern Colorado. Today, I would like to pay tribute to their heroic efforts before this body of Congress and this nation.

When the Missionary Ridge fire first erupted last June, the citizens of Durango, Bayfield and the surrounding communities called upon the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District to protect their loved ones, homes, and communities from what would become the worst fire in area history. The fire began in a ditch beside Missionary Ridge Road just 15 miles northeast of Durango and grew to consume more than 70,000 acres, 56 residences, and 27 outbuildings.

Although the Missionary Ridge fire was a devastating reminder of how destructive forest fires can be, it also served to remind us of the men and women who risk their lives to protect their fellow citizens on a daily basis. The Upper Pine River Fire Protection District has served the citizens of La Plata County since 1974 and oversees a 264 square mile region. The district relies upon its Fire Chief, Jim Piccoli, its Deputy Fire Chief, Rod Richardson, and nearly 65 volunteers to remain on call, prepared to fight fires or provide medical assistance on a moment's notice.

Mr. Speaker, it is with sincere admiration that I recognize the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District of La Plata County before this body of Congress and this nation. I want to commend the Chief and all of the Fire District's fire fighters for their determination, courage, and resolve during last summer's efforts on Missionary Ridge. Without the help of the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District and others, the added devastation to our community, environment, and quality of life would have been unimaginable. Their tireless commitment throughout the fire season has served as an inspiration to us all and it is an honor to represent such an outstanding group of Americans in this Congress.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO JAMES R. TILLING FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE STATE OF OHIO

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding gentleman, and good friend, from Ohio. Jim Tilling came to Ohio, in September 1969, to begin a career as a political science professor at Ohio University in Athens. He spent six years at Ohio University where he taught courses in American national government, urban government, Soviet government and foreign policy. In 1973-74, he was named a "University Professor"—an honor given each year to the ten best teaching professors at Ohio University.

Mr. Speaker, in February, 1977, Jim joined the staff of the Senate Republican caucus in the Ohio General Assembly. He began as its Director of Communications and Research, then served two terms as Minority Chief of Staff. He was elected Clerk of the Senate for 1981-82.

From January 1984 until April 1994, Mr. Tilling served as Chief Executive Officer of the Senate with me when I was Senate President and also for my successor, Senate President Stanley Aronoff. In that capacity, he was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Senate's staff and also worked with Senate Republican members to develop their legislative policy agenda.

In 1981-82, Jim was the principal co-author of the bi-partisan congressional redistricting plan, which determined congressional district boundaries for that decade. In 1991, he served as secretary to the Ohio Apportionment Board, in which capacity he was the principal author of the redistricting plan for the Ohio General Assembly in the 1990's. Jim has served as Chief of Staff for the Ohio Attorney General since January 9, 1995.

Jim Tilling has had a significant impact on public policy in Ohio. He is the public servant not often seen or heard from in the media. However, he is the person that makes the operation work. His substantive knowledge and steadfast patience have served well the many elected officials in Ohio with whom Jim has served. These chances to give back to the public have brought him a lifetime of both personal and professional achievement. Jim truly is a valued asset to the state of Ohio.

Jim will leave big shoes to fill in the halls of Ohio state government. His wisdom, honesty and forthrightness are attributes to which all public servants should aspire. He has set an example for everyone on how to live a life of service, putting the greater interests of the community before one's own.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to James R. Tilling. Our communities are served well by having such honorable and giving citizens, like Jim, who care about their well being and stability. We wish Jim, his wife, Cathy, and their family all the best as we pay tribute to one of our state's finest citizens.